

WASHINGTON
USIA

The U.S. Information Agency kept a 'blacklist' of people -- including Walter Cronkite and David Brinkley -- not considered suitable for government-sponsored speaking trips abroad, USIA Deputy Director Leslie Lenkowsky said today.

Lenkowsky, who joined the USIA, the government's overseas information arm, last September, said neither he nor USIA Director Charles Wick had been aware of the list that apparently was started in 1981. Lenkowsky said he ordered it destroyed immediately.

Many of the 84 persons on the list were prominent liberals or Democrats but Lenkowsky said others were obscure academicians who apparently had displeased someone in the agency.

'This list was kept down in the bowels of the bureaucracy by career people who wanted to keep a record of those persons who for one reason or another were not going to be programmed (considered for the speaking program),' Lenkowsky said. 'In my view it was a terrible error. As soon as I heard about it I ordered it destroyed.'

He said most of those on the list had not sought to take part in the agency's speaker program and were unaware they had been blacklisted.

Those on the list included former CBS News anchorman Walter Cronkite, ABC News broadcaster David Brinkley, civil rights activist Coretta Scott King, feminist Betty Friedan, economist John Kenneth Galbraith, consumer advocate Ralph Nader, former CIA Director Stansfield Turner, Carter administration Cabinet members James Schlesinger and Patricia Roberts Harris, Sen. Gary Hart, D-Colo., and Reps. Robert Garcia, D-N.Y., Thomas Downey, D-N.Y., and Jack Brooks, D-Texas.

Among the journalists on the list were Washington Post Executive Editor Benjamin Bradlee, Post diplomatic reporter John Goshko, New York Times columnist Tom Wicker and writers Elizabeth Drew and James Fallows.

While the blacklist, reported in today's Washington Post, included Bradlee, the agency had a list of 'approved' speakers that included Post publisher Donald Graham and Katharine Graham, chairman of the board of The Washington Post Co., Lenkowsky said.

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